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A SKETCH OF HIS LIFE AND TEACHINGS



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GURU GOVIND

(1666-1708)



WHEN Guru Nanak felt that his end^s was approaching, he appointed as his successor in the Guruship one of his most faithful followers, passing over his two sons despite their remonstrances, one of them being an ascetic and the other a man of the world. He selected one whom he thought most fit by moral courage and devotion to the cause to carry on his ministry unimpaired. He did not consider the office a hereditary one, but this was later on brought about by a father's strong affection for a devoted daughter. The man so chosen by Nanak was a humble labouring man, Angad by name, who spread the religion by scrupulously adhering to his master's doctrine and commands. Before his death, he, also deeming neither of his sons worthy of the office nominated as successor one of his most earnest followers, a petty carrier by trade, Guru Amar Das (that was how he was called), had great devotion to the faith and sent out missionaries to the various parts of the country to sow the seeds of the Sikh faith. His daughter, to whom he was devotedly attached, married Ram Das, a Jat youth of good family of the Sodhi tribe, who became a zealous Sikh. The Guru at her request not only nominated him

as his successor, but also made the office hereditary in her offspring. Under Ram Das who became the fourth Guru in 1574, the Sikhs greatly increased and by their offerings he was enabled to live in state. He was of a quiet and peaceful disposition, given to literary pursuits and devoted to the interests of the Sikh community. He laid the foundation of the city of Amritsar (Nectar Tank) upon a site granted to him by the tolerant Emperor Akbar, and excavated the holy tank from which the town derives its name. In its midst on a small island he erected a temple, the future centre of Sikh devotion. He died in 1581, after having appointed his son Arjun as his successor. The Guruship had now become hereditary.

Arjun, the fifth Guru, established himself at Amritsar and completed the sacred tank and temple. A flourishing town grew up around them, which became the rallying point of the Sikhs who had now rapidly increased in numbers and importance. Up to this time the Gurus led a quiet life, averse to outward show, but Arjun, by means of the wealth resulting from the offerings of increased numbers of disciples, lived like a prince and kept a numerous band of adherents about him. He was now looked upon by them as a king as well as a spiritual leader, with system and method, he organised them into a community, and in order to raise their status, to separate them from the mass of the Hindus and to unite them by one common religious tie, he compiled a sacred code written in the mother tongue of the Jats. In this were incorporated

the sayings and Psalms of Nanak, his own compositions and those of the other gurus with selected works of the religious reformers of other provinces like Kabir, Ramanand, Namdev, etc., with which the works and teachings of the Sikh gurus had a good deal of spiritual affinity and even historical connection. This "Gianth" supplanted the Hindu Vedas and Puranas which the unlettered people could not read. He named it the *Granth*, the Holy Book, which to the present day is held in the greatest veneration by the Sikhs as binding on all true disciples. Guru Arjun also instituted daily public worship at the temple of Amritsar, where crowds came daily to bathe, when the "Granth" was recited all day long with songs of praise to the accompaniment of stringed musical instruments.

Up to this time, the income of the Guru had proceeded from voluntary offerings. Arjun now reduced this to a regular religious tax levied by deputies appointed in the various districts, who presented the amount to the Guru in the annual General Assembly at Amritsar. The Sikhs were thus gradually accustomed to a domestic government of their own and began to feel themselves an organised and powerful community. The teaching of the new faith having met with much success and taken firm root among the Jat peasantry by means of this secular policy, the Guru's personal power and means greatly increased, thereby attracting public attention to him. Accordingly he excited the jealousy and enmity of the Imperial Governor of Lahore, was charged with treason in espousing

the cause of the Emperor's rebel son in one of the numerous family disputes among the Moghuls, and was thrown into prison at Lahore, where he died in 1606, his death being ascribed to torture. His last message to his people was "God is the strength of the strengthless, He neither cometh nor goeth, He is permanent ever." Guru Arjun's death was looked upon as that of a martyr to the faith. It inflamed the religious passions of the peaceful sect, converting them into a warlike community ready to defend their religion with the sword. This became the turning-point in Sikh history and developed the struggle which changed the whole character of the reformatory movement.

Har Govind succeeded his father as the sixth Guru in 1606, and found himself at the head of a powerful and widespread religious order whose influence was felt far and near. Of a warlike spirit, he armed his followers and inspired them with his own spirit of revenge and of hatred to their oppressors. At an audience with the Moghul Emperor, he proved the treachery against his father and secured the execution of his powerful murderer. Political leadership now developed in this young Guru who assumed the character of a soldier, while his Sikhs became a brotherhood in arms as in faith. Like a fighting bishop of the middle ages in Europe, he led his warriors in person, when impelled to side with any combatant, and took service in the Moghul army. After a time he fell under suspicion and the Emperor imprisoned him in the Gwalior fort for twelve years. On being released at the accession of the new Em-

peror, he re-entered the Moghul service, but, later on, suspecting treachery, he fled to Amritsar, where the Sikh ecclesiastical headquarters had remained under the system established by his father.

On three occasions after desperate fighting, he defeated the royal troops sent against him. He was now looked upon as a hero and a master of the art of war, and the Sikhs were always ready to rally round his banner, but, being satisfied with his success so far, and knowing the strength and resources of the Moghul Government, he retired to the sub Himalayan hills to preserve his power and recruit his followers. The sect had now risen to the dignity of persecution and, despite repressive measures, crowds of Jat peasantry joined it.

Har Govind quite changed the character of the peaceful Nanak's disciples who now laid aside their rosaries and buckled on the sword in defence of their faith. His popularity increased with the warlike Jats, who, oppressed in their villages, joined him in large numbers. The camp became their home and the plunder of the Mahomedans their lawful prey. He died in 1638, after nominating as his successor his grandson, Har Rai, the son of his eldest deceased son. The fighting spirit ^{of the} of the Sikhs having been roused and their quality proved, they became a power to be courted. Under the new Guru, they soon joined a son of the Moghul Emperor in rebellion, who was friendly to them, but eventually the Sikhs were forced to retreat to the hills. Guru Har Rai died, his

young son, six years of age, succeeded him as the eighth Guru, but a contest now arose among the Sikhs regarding the succession which, curiously enough, was referred to the arbitration of the Moghul Emperor who summoned the boy to Delhi where he died.

Tegh Bhahadur, the younger son of the martial Har Govind, the sixth Guru, was now selected as the ninth Guru. His mother, when the succession went some years before to Har Govind's grandson, remonstrated at the decision, but the dying Guru gave his arms to her to keep for her son Tegh Bhahadur, who, he said, would yet become Guru. Tegh Bhahadur seems to have been at first unwilling to accept the office, saying that he would rather be *Degh* Bhahadur (Lord of the Cooking-pot—Hospitality) than Tegh Bhahadur (Lord of the Sword) meaning that he preferred to support the poor and feed the hungry rather than be a leader or warrior. The assembled Sikhs hailed this as a most auspicious offer of unbounded hospitality and acted up to their maxim "*Jiska degħ us ka tegh*" (my sword is at the service of him who feeds me) by flocking in great numbers to his banner. He built a fort near Sulej, now the city of Anandpur, in the year 1665, he established therein his military and ecclesiastical headquarters and continued the fitful life of struggle with the hated Mahomedans. Finding, it is said, that Aurangazib had given orders to convert all people in the Punjab and Kashmir to the Mahomedan faith, Guru Tegh Bhahadur resolved to visit the Emperor in person and expos-
tulate with him on the cruelty and injustice of

his doings The Emperor on meeting him addressed him saying that it was his pleasure that there should be but one religion in the world and that Hinduism and all other religions were false The Guru replied, "O Emperor, Thou and I and all people must act according to God's will If it were the will of God that there should be only one religion, He would not have allowed the Mahomedan and the Hindu religions to exist at the same time He hath no partner and He can do as He pleaseth. Neither thou nor I can oppose Him " Tegh Bhahadur was at last ordered to be imprisoned and, finally on an absurd charge of some breach of etiquette and propriety, beheaded by order of the Emperor

Just before execution, he is said to have sent the following *slok* to his son

"My strength is exhausted, I am in chains and have no resource Saith Nanak, God is now my refuge, He will succour me as he did the elephant"

"My associates and companions have all abandoned me, no one remaineth with me to the last, saith Nanak, in this calamity God is mine only support"

It is said that the other hymns of Tegh Bhahadur occurring in the *Granth* were composed during this captivity and sent by the messenger to Anandpur The head of Tegh Bhahadur was recovered by some daring men of low caste called Muzhabis, who were afterwards as a reward for their courage, enrolled by Govind as Singhs, a charter which gave them higher status as brave fighting men and Sikhs Several

thousands of this class are in the Indian army at the present day.

GURU GOVIND'S BIRTH

During Tegh Bhahadur's journey to the Eastern provinces, he left his mother and his wife who was then pregnant at Patna. While at Patna, Tegh Bhahadur's wife gave birth to the child Govind Rai, on the seventh day of the eighth half of the month of *Pot* in the year 1666 A D (Samvat 1723). On the birth of Govind Rai, the Sikh historian remarks, " It hath ever been usual that, when God seeth his people suffering, He sendeth a saviour of the world " / The grandmother, mother and child lived for some time at Patna, supported by the faithful Sikhs of the locality and returned to Anandpur only some time before Tegh Bhahadur's fateful journey to Delhi. As a child, Govind Singh seems to have been greatly fond of sports and martial exercises and, gathering a few companions, often engaged in shooting and the chase. When he came to Anandpur, he was affectionately received by his father who at once made efforts to give the boy mental and physical equipment. The times, however, were hard and Govind Rai was not long to enjoy Tegh Bhahadur's care and affection. On the representation of the Hindus of Kashmir who complained that they were much persecuted by the Mahommedans, Tegh Bhahadur, as has been said, started for Delhi to visit the Emperor in person. He knew that death was before him and calling his child, his family and his devoted Sikhs together, took leave of them. He then invested his son Govind Rai, then only

nine years of age with the sword of his father, Har Govind, who had first used it in defence of the faith, hailed him as the future Guru of the Sikhs and exhorted him to recover his body. The tragic story of Tegh Bhahadur's journey to Delhi which ended in his death has already been narrated. On his death, Govind Rai was installed as the tenth guru at the tender age of nine years (1675 A D)

GOVIND SINGH'S YOUTH AND EARLY LIFE

After his father's death and his installation as a Guru, Govind Rai continued with greater diligence than ever to prepare himself for a life of military defence and national achievement. Beginning with his few cousins, the sons of his aunt Viro and his uncle Suraj Mal, he gathered large numbers of followers, supplied them with arms and arrows and with them practised archery and musket shooting. As increasing numbers came, Govind Rai formed a regular army and, in order to complete his military equipment, had a big drum constructed. The activities of the youthful Govind Rai were not, however, free to develop, they aroused the suspicions of the hill Rajahs who now began to treat the Guru with hostility. Govind Rai's own mother and uncle expostulated with him, saying "Our business is with religion for which humility is required." The Guru replied, "Mother, dear, how long shall I remain in concealment? I am not going to take forcible possession of the hill Rajahs' territories. If they are jealous for nothing and allow their hearts to rankle, I cannot help it. This is the Guru's castle where men shall obtain their deserts."

The hill Rajahs, under the leadership of Rajah Fatah Shah of Srinagar made war on Govind Singh, aided by Mahommedan mercenaries Govind Singh defeated the Rajahs completely, and his followers and countrymen rejoiced greatly. For twenty years from his accession to the Guruship, Govind Rai thus continued his life amidst the secluded valleys of the Sutlej, gathering followers, exercising them in arms and discipline, and occasionally fighting and conquering small bits of territory from the unfriendly hill Rajahs.

GOVIND'S MARRIAGE

Two years after his installation, a man named Bikhia residing in Lahore went to visit the Guru, and seeing him handsome and well-proportioned, offered him his daughter Jito. The Guru's mother was pleased and the marriage was soon celebrated (1677 A D). Some time after, another Sikh who had a daughter named Sundari proposed to the Guru to wed her and make her the slave of his feet. The Guru did not desire another wife but it was pressed on him by his mother, and the Guru's nuptials were not long after solemnised. Four sons were born to Govind of whom two died in battle, and the other two, as we shall afterwards see, were cruelly put to death by the Mahommedans in Sirhind. The names of the two sons of Jito were Zorawar Singh and Jujhar Singh, while those of Sundari were Ajit Singh and Falat Singh, these two being the eldest and the last.

GOVIND SINGH AND HINDU SHASTRAS

It was during this period of his life—a period of study and warlike preparation—that Govind

Singh called in a number of bards to translate the Hindu Puranas and the Epics—the Mahabharata and the Ramayana, the stories of Durga, Rama, Krishna and other Hindu Deities. It is also said that Govind celebrated a great sacrifice in honour of Durga, hoping that the goddess would help him in his military pursuits and ambition. This chapter of his life has been criticised by many adversely to Sikhism as indicating a relapse on the part of Guru Govind into idolatrous Hinduism. From what we find in his great and authentic hymns and poems, there is nothing to indicate that Govind Singh was an idolater in any bad sense of the term. He often pours ridicule upon the worship of stones and stocks and meaningless rituals and rites. The proper explanation therefore of this incident of his life is perhaps the one advanced by the learned writer, Macauliffe, in his book on Sikhism. At that time it was the custom to recite on the eve of battle the praises and warlike deeds of the brave, so that the hearts even of cowards might be inspired with eagerness for the fray. On that account the tenth Guru maintained fifty-two bards to translate the Mahabharat, the Ramayana, the gallant achievements of Ram, Krishna, Chandī and others. It does not follow from this that the Guru worshipped those whose acts were thus celebrated, this was only done for the purpose of inciting to bravery, dispelling cowardice, and filling the hearts of his troops with valour to defend their faith. This the Guru himself declares in his translation of the tenth canto of the *Bhagavat* in which are

recounted the chivalrous exploits of Krishna. He says, "I have rendered in the vulgar dialect the tenth chapter of the *Bhagarat* with no other object than to inspire ardour for religious warfare"

THE FORMATION OF THE KHALSA

By this time, when the Guru was some thirty years old, Govind Singh had matured his plans of reforming the Sikhs and forming them into a compact and homogeneous people. The violent death of his father and the deep sense of the wrongs of his persecuted race of which reports were daily reaching his ears, had long rankled in his mind and he now resolved to put an end to them. The time too perhaps suited him, the bigot emperor Aurangzeb having commenced a crusade against Hindu and Sikh alike.

The Guru invited all his Sikhs to attend the great Baisakhi fair at Anandpur. Many were the men to respond, they came in crowds and joined him. On finding them assembled, the Guru ordered that carpets be spread on a raised mound which he indicated, and that an adjacent spot should be screened off with tent walls. When this was done, the Guru ordered a confidential Sikh to go at midnight, tie five goats in the enclosure and let no one know what he had done. Next morning, the Guru rose a watch before day, performed his devotions and put on his arms and uniform. He then proclaimed that there should be a great open-air gathering. When all were seated, he drew his sword, and asked if there was any one of his beloved Sikhs ready to lay down

his life for him. No reply was given. All grew pale on hearing such a proposal. The Guru asked a second time but with the same result. A third time he spoke in a louder voice, "If there be any true Sikh of mine, let him give me his head as an offering and proof of his faith." Daya Singh, a Sikh of Lahore, rose and said "O true King, my head is at thy service." The Guru took his arm, led him within the enclosure and gave him a seat. He then cut off a goat's head with one stroke of the sword, went forth and showed the dripping weapon to the multitude. The Guru asked again, 'Is there any other true Sikh who will bestow his head on me?' The crowd felt now quite convinced that the Guru was in earnest and that he had killed Daya Ram so no one replied. At the third time of asking, Dharm Das of Delhi answered, "O Great King, take my head." The Guru, assuming an angry mien, took Dharm Das within the enclosure, seated him near Daya Ram and killed another goat. The Guru then looking very fierce, came forth and said, 'Is there any other Sikh who will offer me his head? I am in great need of Sikhs' heads.' On this some remarked that the Guru had lost his reason, others went to the Guru's mother to complain. When the Guru began to call for the fourth Sikh the Sikhs thought he was going to kill them all. So, some ran away and some hung down their heads. Sahib Chand, a resident of Bidar was the fourth to place himself at the disposal of the Guru. The Guru took him into the tent and killed another goat. The Guru then came out and asked for the

head of another Sikh. On this many ran away. Himmat of Jagannath was the fifth to offer himself. The Guru took him inside the tent and killed the remaining goat.

The Guru was now ready to sacrifice his own life for the five Sikhs who showed such devotion to him. He clad them in splendid raiment, so that they shone like the sun, and thus addressed them: "My brethren, you are in my form, and I am in yours. He who thinketh there is any difference between us erreth exceedingly." Then seating the five Sikhs near him, he addressed the assembly, "In the time of Guru Nanak, there was found one devout Sikh, namely Guru Angad. In my time there are found five Sikhs totally devoted to the Guru. These shall lay anew the foundation of Sikhism, and the true religion shall become current and famous throughout the world." The people became astonished at the Guru's expedient, and fell at the feet of the five devoted Sikhs, saying "Hail to the Sikh religion! You, brethren, have established it on a permanent basis. Had we offered our heads like you, we too should be blest." The Guru again addressed the Sikhs: "Since the time of Baba Nanak, *charanpahul* hath been customary. Men drank the water in which the Gurus had washed their feet, a custom which led to great humility, but the Khalsa can now only be maintained as a nation by bravery and skill in arms. Therefore I now institute the custom of baptism by water stirred with a dagger and change my followers from Sikhs to *Singhs* or Lions. They who accept the nectar of the

pahul shall be changed before your very eyes from jackals into lions and shall obtain empire in this world and bliss hereafter ”

According to the Persian historian Ghulam Muhaul Din, the newswriter of the day sent the Emperor a copy of the Guru's address to the Sikhs on this occasion. It is dated the first of Baisakh, Samvat 1756 (1699 A D) and runs as follows, “ Let all embrace one creed and obliterate differences of religion. Let the four Hindu castes who have different rules for their guidance abandon them all, adopt the one form of adoration, and become-brothers. Let no one deem himself superior to another. Let none pay heed to the Ganges and other places of pilgrimage which are spoken of with reverence in the Shastras or adore incarnations such as Ram, Krishna, Brahma and Durga, but believe in Guru Nanak and other Sikh Gurus. Let men of the four castes receive my baptism, eat out of one dish, and feel no disgust or contempt for one another ”

The newswriter, while forwarding the report, thus makes his own comment thereon. “ When the Guru had thus addressed the crowd, several Brahmins and Khatrias stood up, and said that they accepted the religion of Guru Nanak and the other Gurus. Others on the contrary said that they would never accept any religion which was opposed to the teaching of the Vedas and the Shastras and that they would not renounce at the bidding of a boy the ancient faith which had descended to them from their ancestors. Thus, though several refused to accept the Guru's religion, about twenty thousand men stood up

and promised to obey him, as they had the fullest faith in his divine mission."

The Guru caused his five faithful Sikhs to stand up. He put pure water into an iron vessel and stirred it with a *khanda* or two-edged sword. He then repeated over it the sacred verses which he had appointed for the ceremony viz, the Jappi, Guru Amar Das's Anand, and certain Sawaiyas (which will be found in a latter part of this sketch) or quatrains of his own composition. While this was being done, Mata Jito, wife of Govind, passed by, carrying some sweetmeats. Govind Singh said that she had come at an opportune moment and asked her to throw the sweets with the holy water. He had begun, he said, to beget the Khalsa (this word coming from the Arabic *khabs* meaning 'pure' and was applied by Guru Govind to the Sikhs who accepted the baptism of the sword), and without a woman, no son could be produced. Now that the sweets were poured into the nectar, the Sikhs would be at peace with one another, otherwise they would be at continual variance. The five Sikhs, fully dressed and accoutred, stood up before the Guru. He told them to repeat '*Wah Guru*' and the preamble of the Jappi. He then gave five palmfuls of the *amrit* to drink. He sprinkled it five times on their hair and their eyes and told them to repeat '*Wah Guru ji ka Khalsa, Wah Guru ji ki Matah*'. On this he gave them the appellation of Singhs or Lions. He then explained to them what they might or might not do. They must always wear the following articles, whose names begin with a *K*,

viz., *Kes*—longhair, *Kangha*—a comb, *Kripan*—a sword, *Kaeck*—short drawers, *Kara*—a steel bracelet They were enjoined to practise arms and never to show their backs to the foe in battle They were ever to help the poor and protect those who sought their protection They must not look with lust on another's wife or commit fornication, but ever adhere to their wedded spouses They were to consider their previous castes erased and deem themselves all brothers of one family They were freely to intermarry with one another but must have no social or matrimonial relations with smokers with persons who killed their daughters, with the descendants or the followers of Prethe Chand, etc., and the *masnads* who had fallen away from the tenets of Guru Nanak They must not worship idols, cemeteries or cremation grounds They must believe only in the Immortal God They must rise at dawn, bathe, read the prescribed hymns of the Gurus, meditate on the Creator, abstain from the flesh of an animal whose throat had been cruelly jagged with a knife in the Mahommedan fashion, and be loyal to their masters

When the Guru had thus administered baptism to his five tried Sikhs, he stood up before them with clasped hands and begged them to administer baptism to himself in the same way as he had administered to them They were astonished at such a proposal, and represented their own unworthiness and the greatness of the Guru They asked why he made such a request and why he stood in a suppliant posture

In a short time, 80,000 were gathered round him. In addressing them he commenced by praising God as the Almighty, the Omnipotent, Invincible and Merciful who must be worshipped in truthfulness and in sincerity. He could only be beheld by the eye of faith in the general body of the Khalsa. All Sikhs must live like brothers. A number of these remarkable addresses of Govind Singh to his followers given on the battle field or in the camp or in the general meetings which were held on stated occasions or when large numbers of Sikhs came to be baptised, are preserved in the Sikh chronicles and attest his eloquence, his strength of mind and ideal and the perseverance with which he ever kept the Sikhs in memory of the great ideal he had dedicated himself to work for.

“O Sikhs, borrow not, but, if you are compelled to borrow, faithfully restore the debt. Speak not falsely and associate not with the untruthful. Practise truth, love truth, clasp truth to your hearts. Live by honest labour and deceive no one. Let not a Sikh be covetous. Repeat the Japji before eating. Look not on a naked woman. Act according to the *Grantha Sahib*. Cling to the boat in which thou hast embarked. Wander not in search of another religion. Marry only into the house of a Sikh. Preserve thy wife and children from evil company. Eat regardless of caste with all Sikhs who have been baptised.”

“Habitually attend a Sikh temple and eat a little sacred food therefrom. Let a Sikh contribute a tenth part of his earnings for

“He who giveth his daughter to a Sikh and taketh no money is a Sikh of mine”

“Let Sikh men and women sit together and hold divine discourse Let them worship God themselves and teach their children to do so”

“Let him who calleth himself a true Sikh of mine accept baptism and do good acts (Let him renounce the service of demons and spirits and the worship of stones and false gods)”

On another occasion

“O Sikhs, act as follows—Clothe and feed your brother Sikhs, as far as your means allow, shampoo them, bathe them, wash their clothes, fan them when they perspire, draw them cool water from the well and cook them food

“Let them night and day do similar offices unto each other, commit to memory the Guru's hymns and repeat the True Name.

“On seeing any person in trouble, take compassion on him, and remove his sufferings to the best of your ability”(Then the Primal Supreme Being will be merciful unto you)

“Wear not dirty clothes, associate not with thieves, adulterers, gamblers, etc (Remember the sinner is worse than the sin, for he is the cause thereof)

“Bathe in holy Amritsar Behold the God's temple where the Guru's words are ever repeated Sit down therein respectfully and allow your minds to think of nothing but God (Ever look with devotion on where His Light is resplendent

If he who deemeth himself a Sikh behold not Amritsar, why did he take birth in the

world? Unprofitable is his advent and he shall afterwards regret his negligence "

Govind Singh thus appealed to the eternal instincts of equality, liberty and brotherhood, broke for ever the caste prejudices and received into the Khalsa people of all classes who had hitherto been debarred from bearing arms and participating in religion. The Singhs of the Khalsa should have felt themselves at once elevated and equal to the proud and martial Rajput. Personal pride and strength were infused into them, and Sikhism knitted them together into one common brotherhood, animated by a common faith, one social life and national longing

The effect of these new teachings, it is said, was immediate and profound. The Sikhs began to manifest great chivalry and courage and live in sweet social love and harmony among themselves. Wherever there was oppression or cruelty, the Sikhs were there and with ready heart and brave arms, helped the persecuted. Among themselves they lived like brothers, they used to feed one another, shampoo one another when tired, bathe one another, wash one another's clothes, and one Sikh always met another with a smile on his face and love in his heart. Their devotion to their religion and the Guru also grew, and morning and evening they could be seen in the camp or their village homes devoutly repeating the Japji and the Sohila and the hymns of the Gurus

STRUGGLES WITH THE MAHOMMEDAN EMPEROR

The increasing power of Govind Singh and his nation, the new courage and faith he had infused

into them, filled the neighbouring hill Rajahs with fear and even roused the suspicions of the Delhi Government. An army was therefore sent under Sayid Khan to subdue Govind Singh; Sayid Khan however seems to have betrayed his command and joined Guru Govind. A second time, another army was sent under Wazir Khan with strict orders to capture Anandpur and destroy Govind Singh's forces. Wazir Khan's army advanced and soon laid siege to Anandpur. Hill chiefs too came and joined the Mahommedan general with their army. The siege was long and protracted. Govind Singh defended the city with great courage and heroism. But brave and valiant as they were, they were face to face with a highly equipped and more numerous army, at last Govind Singh and his few surviving followers were forced to evacuate the city. Govind Singh marched south by way of Kirtapur, while his mother and his two children (the other two had already fallen in the battle) went to Suhind where they took refuge in a Brahman's house. The treacherous Brahman robbed the mother of the wealth she was carrying, and, more horrible still, betrayed their arrival to the local Mahommedan governor. The tragic story of the children's death is well known, how the two heroic youths were asked, on the penalty of death, to embrace the Mahommedan faith, how they nobly refused to fall away from the faith of their father and their Gurus, how they were at last cruelly buried alive under a wall.

GOVIND SINGH'S LETTER TO AURANGAZIB

The news of the tragic fate of his children

reached Govind Singh while he was staying at a village called Jatpura, fifty miles from Suhind. It is said that the Guru on hearing the narrative, dug up a shrub growing by with his knife and uttered, "As I dig up this shrub by the roots, so shall the Turks be extirpated." The Guru next went to Dina and it was here, where his stay appears to have been somewhat protracted that he wrote his celebrated Persian epistle to Aurangazib in reply to an invitation from the Emperor to come and see the latter. The evidence as to whether the letter reached Aurangazib or how he received it is meagre, but, as it is, nothing can excel the remarkable strength and courage, and the noble indignation, it reveals. Withal it is instinct with a great religious and moral fervour, little known to the iconoclastic faith of the Mahommedans. In it are combined the righteous indignation of the saint as well as the woes of the patriot. We give the letter below. It is styled *Zafar Nama* —

"I have no faith in thine oath to which thou tookest the One God as witness. I have not a particle of confidence in thee. Thy treasurer and thy ministers are all false.

As to my defeat at Chamkaur, what could forty men do when a hundred thousand came on them unawares?

The oath-breakers attacked them abruptly with swords, arrows and muskets. I was forced to engage in the combat and I fought to the utmost of my ability. When an affair passeth beyond the region of diplomacy, it is lawful to have recourse to the sword.

Did I not know that thou, O faithless man, wert a worshipper of wealth and perjurer? (Thou keepest no faith and observest no religion) Thou knowest not God, and believest not in Mohammed. He who hath regard for his religion never swerveth from his promise. Thou hast no idea of what an oath on the Quran is, and canst have no belief in Divine Providence. When thou didst swear by Mohammed and called the word of God to witness, it was incumbent on thee to observe that oath. Were the Prophet himself present here, I would make it my special object to inform him of thy treachery. If thou hast spoken truly, then come to me. If thou come to the village of Kangar, we shall have an interview. Thou shalt not run the slightest danger on the way, for the whole tribe of Bairais are under me.

I am a slave and servant of the King of Kings and ready to obey His order with my life. Should His orders reach me, I will go to thee with all my heart. If thou have any belief in God, delay not in this matter. *It is thy duty to know God. He never ordered thee to annoy others.* Thou art seated on an emperor's throne, yet how strange are thy justice, thine attributes and thy regard for religion! Alas! a hundred times alas! for thy sovereignty! Strange, strange is thy decree! Promises not intended to be fulfilled injure those who make them. Smite not any one mercilessly with the sword, or a sword from on high shall smite thyself. O man, be not reckless, fear God. He cannot be flattered or praised. The King of kings is without fear. He is the true Emperor.

of earth and heaven. God is the master of both worlds. He is the creator of all animals from the feeble ant to the strong elephant. He is the Protector of the miserable and Destroyer of the reckless. His name is the support of the unhappy. It is He who showeth man the way he ought to go. Thou art bound by thy oath on the Quran. Bring the matter to a good issue according to thy promises. It is incumbent on thee to act wisely and be discreet in all thy actions. What though my four sons were killed, I remain behind like a coiled snake? What bravery is it to quench a few sparks of life? Thou art merely exciting a raging fire the more. How well spoke the sweet-tongued Firdausi, {Haste is the devil's work!} I would have gone many times to thee, had thy promise been kept when the bullocks were plundered. As thou didst forget thy word on that day, so will God forget thee. God will award thee the fruit of the evil deed thou didst design. *It is good to act according to thy religion and to know that God is dearer than life.* I do not deem thou knowest God, since thou hast done acts of oppression. Wherefore, the great God knoweth thee not and will not receive thee with all thy wealth. I will not enter thy presence, nor travel on the same road with thee, but if God so will it, I will proceed towards thee.

Fortunate art thou, Aurangazib, king of kings, expert swordsman and rider. Handsome is thy person and thou art intelligent. Thou art generous to thy co-religionists and prompt to crush thine enemies. Thy generosity is profuse,

and in battle thou art firm as a mountain *Thou art monarch of the world, but far from thee is religion*

I wanted to kill the hillmen who were full of strife They worshipped idols and I was an idol-breaker Behold the power of the good and pure God who by means of one man killed hundreds of thousands What can an enemy do when God the friend is kind ? His function it is, as the great Bestower, to bestow He giveth deliverance and pointeth out the way to His creatures He teacheth the tongue to utter His praises In the hour of action, He blindeth the enemy He rescueth the helpless and protecteth them from injury The Merciful showeth mercy to him who acteth honestly (God bestoweth peace on him who heartily performeth His service) How can an enemy lead astray him with whom the Guide of the way is well pleased ? Should tens of thousands proceed against such a person, the Creator will be his guardian When thou lookest to thine army and wealth, I look to God's praises Thou art proud of thine empire, while I am proud of the kingdom of the Immortal God Be not heedless, this caravansary is only for a few days People leave it at all times Behold the revolution which passeth over every denizen and house in this faithless world Even though thou art strong, annoy not the weak (Lay not the axe to thy Kingdom) When God is a friend, what can an enemy do even though he multiply himself a hundred times ? If an enemy practise enmity a thousand times, he cannot, as long as God is a friend, injure even a hair of one's head "

Govind Singh was still pursued by the Mahomedan troops and seems to have retreated further east. While at Baghaur, he heard of Aurangazib's death. On Aurangazib's death, there was a scramble among his sons for the throne, and Bhahadur Shah who eventually became Emperor, sought Govind Singh's help. The assistance rendered by the Guru's army was valuable and earned him the gratitude of Bhahadur Shah. The Emperor went and met the Guru and expressed his affection and gratitude to the Guru. The Guru then marched on an expedition with the Emperor to the south, having been placed by the latter at the head of 5,000 horses. While they reached Nander on the banks of the Godavari, the Guru was mortally wounded by a Pathan assassin. The current Sikh account is that he was stabbed by one Gul Khan, a grandson of Punda Khan, in revenge for the death of the latter at the hands of Guru Har Govind. Another account is given in Bhahadur Shah's history viz., that the Guru used often to address assemblies of disciples and strangers on religion, that, on one such occasion, some words fell from his lips which sounded to a Mahomedan as blaspheming his faith and that the latter at once stabbed the Guru with a poniard.

GURU'S LAST ADDRESS

As Govind Singh lay mortally wounded, he gathered himself and thus addressed his assembled followers, "O Dear and Beloved Khalas, the immortal God's will can never be resisted. He who is born must assuredly die. Guru Arjun hath said 'everything we behold shall perish'—It is the Immortal God alone who ever abideth

Know that the light of the Imperishable God whose attributes are permanence, consciousness, happiness ever shineth in you Wherefore always abide in cheerfulness, never give away to mourning . For the love of creatures, the Guru assumed birth He hath instructed them in the True Name. O Khalsa,

ever remember the true name The Guru hath arrayed you in arms to procure you the sovereignty of the earth Those who have died in battle have gone to the abode of bliss I have attached you to the skirt of the Immortal God and entrusted you to Him Read the Granth Sahib or listen to it, so shall your minds receive consolation " Again he said, "I have entrusted you to the Immortal God Ever remain under His protection, trust no one besides Wherever there are five Sikhs assembled who abide by the Guru's teachings, know that I am in the midst of them

I have infused my soul into the Khalsa and the Granth Sahib " He then bathed and putting on new clothes' said "Wah Guru jika Khalsa Wah Guru jiki Fatah O beloved Khalsa let him, who desireth to behold me, behold the Guru Granth Obey the Granth Sahib It is the visible body of the Guru And let him who desireth to meet me diligently search its hymns "

Few lives, in or outside India, of saint or national leader, have had a more noble close

SOME ESTIMATES OF GURU GOVIND'S WORK

AND CHARACTER

Says Cunningham, " It was reserved for Nanak to perceive the true principles of reform, and to

lay the broad foundations which enabled his successor Govind Singh to fire the minds of the countrymen with a new nationality and to give practical effect to the doctrine that the lowest is equal with the highest, in race as in creed, in political rights as in religious hopes. In the heart of a powerful empire, he (Govind Singh) set himself to the task of subverting it, and from the midst of social degradation and religious corruption, he called up simplicity of manners, singleness of purpose and enthusiasm of desire." In another place, the same historian observes, "Success is not always the measure of greatness." The last Apostle of the Sikhs did not live to see his two ends accomplished, but he effectually roused the dormant energies of a vanquished people, and filled them with a lofty although fitful longing for social freedom and national ascendancy, the proper adjuncts of that purity of worship which had been preached by Nanak. Govind Singh saw what was yet vital, and he revived it with Promethean fire. A living spirit possesses the whole Sikh people, and the impress of Guru Govind Singh has not only elevated and altered the constitution of their minds, but has operated materially and given amplitude to their physical frames. In religious faith and worldly aspirations, they are wholly different from other Indians, and they are bound together by a community of inward sentiments and outward objects unknown elsewhere." In a short history of the Sikhs written by Mr Payne, we find, "Like Nanak, Govind Singh attached the utmost importance to purity of life,

but on a level with it he placed brave deeds and devotion to the Sikh cause" The same writer observes elsewhere, "The martial spirit is the life of the Khalsa As a man of peace, a Sikh is apt to allow his religious fervour to cool, but at the first sound of the call to arms, the spirit of Govind Singh stirs him anew, and he straightaway returns, sword in hand, to the paths of orthodoxy" We shall quote at the end the interesting tribute paid to Govind Singh by Latif in his History of the Punjab He writes, "Awakening his countrymen to a new and noble life, and rousing their latent energies to a sense of common duty, he blended the undaunted courage of the soldier with the enthusiasm of the devotee, and inspired the peaceful ploughmen with ideas of military glory In him were united the qualities of a religious leader and a warrior He was a law-giver in the pulpit, a champion in the field, a king on his masnad, and a faqir in the society of the Khalsa"

GOVIND SINGH'S POETIC WORKS AND RELIGIOUS ATTITUDE.

Govind Singh has left a number of works, some of them, the poems and hymns, being his own composition, and the others, the work of the fifty-two bards he employed, consisting chiefly of translations from the Hindu Epics and Puranas These were collected together into a single work, called *Govind Singh's Granth* or the *Granth* of Govind Singh, and form an object of devoted study and worship among the Sikhs, next to the older *Granth* of Nanak and his immediate successors The original works in this collection consist of a

number of poems, hymns and prayers and the autobiography of the Guru, called the *Vichitra Natak*. These works fully embody the religion and teachings of the tenth Guru and also his great national and warlike ideals. Spite of the eager notes of warlike ambition and secular glory one often meets with in these poems, they are not without a strong mysticism and faith of their own and discover a great and beautiful conception of Godhead and of true religion.

We shall first quote from the *Vichitra Natak* some noble passages in which Govind Singh describes his mission and life-ideal. They lie together in the book with much common verse dealing with the worldly doings and history of of the Guru, but otherwise those poems are remarkable in many ways. They are full of a deep religious passion and spiritual insight. The legend of how the several avatars and saints sent by the Supreme Being to redeem the world became each absorbed in his own glory and praise discovers striking poetry and imagination. But though thus full of noble religion and poetry, the verses are not however untainted with something of the spirit of the very superstitions which they condemn.

“ I shall now tell my own history,
How God brought me into the world as I was
performing penance,

~ * * * * *

God remonstrated earnestly with me,
And sent me into this world with the following
orders—”

" When I created this world,
 I first made the demons, who became enemies and
 oppressors *
 They became intoxicated with the strength of
 their arms,
 And ceased to worship me, the Supreme Being
 I became angry and at once destroyed them—
 In their places, I established the gods
 They also busied themselves with receiving sacri-
 fices and worship,
 And called themselves supreme beings
 Mahadev called himself the unperishable God
 Vishnu too declared himself to be God ,
 Brahm called himself the Supreme Brahm,
 And nobody thought me to be God

* * * * *

They who did not recognise the Primal Essence,
 Worshipped them as God
 How many worshipped the sun and moon !
 How many made burnt offerings ! how many wor-
 shipped the wind !
 Some recognised a stone as God
 How many bathed in the water, according to
 shastraic rites !

* * * * *

They whom I appointed to watch over creatures,
On coming into this world called themselves God
 They altogether forgot My orders,
 And became absorbed each in his own praise
 Then I created men,
 They too fell under the influence of pride,
 And made gods out of stones
 Then I created the Sidhs and the Sadhs,

But they too found not the Supreme Being
 Whoever was clever in the world
 Established his own sect,
 And no one found the Creator
 Enmity, contention and pride increased,
 Men began to burn trunk and leaves in their own
 fire*

And none of them went My way

* * * *

They who follow true religion
 Shall have their sins of various kinds blotted out
 They who endure bodily suffering
 And cease not to love Me,
 Shall all go to Paradise,
 And there shall be no difference between Me and
 them.

* * * *

I have cherished thee as My son,
 And created thee to extend My religion
 Go and spread My religion there,
 And restrain the world from senseless acts "

* * * *

On this account God sent me,
 Then I took birth and came into the world
 As He spoke to me, so I speak unto men ,
 I bear no enmity to any one
 All who call me the Supreme Being
 Shall fall into the pit of hell
 Recognise me as God's servant only
 Have no doubt whatever of this
 I am the slave of the Supreme Being,

(* Means "Big and little perished by their own contentions")

And have come to behold, the wonders of the
world

I tell the world what God told me,
And will not remain silent through fear of mortals

*

*

*

*

As God spoke to me, I speak,
I pay no regard to any one besides
I am satisfied with no religious garb ,
I sow the seed of the Invisible
I am not a worshipper of stones,
Nor am I satisfied with any religious garb
I will sing the Name of the Infinite,
And obtain the Supreme Being
I will not wear matted hair on my head
Nor will I put on ear-rings ,
I will pay regard to no one but God,
What God told me I will do

*

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*

I am imbued with Thy Name, O God !
I am not intoxicated with any other honour
I am enamoured of Thy form ;
No other gift hath charms for me
I will repeat Thy Name,
And avoid endless sorrow
Sorrow and sin have not approached those
Who have meditated on Thy Name
They who meditate on any one else,
Shall die of arguments and contentions.
The Divine Guru sent me for religion's sake
On this account I have come into the world—
" Extend the faith everywhere ,
Seize and destroy the evil and the sinful " ✓

*

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*

I will repeat God's name
 And all my affairs shall prosper,
 I will not close my eyes,
 Or do anything for show
 They who wear a religious garb ,
 Are deemed naught by the saints of God
 Understand this, all men, in your hearts,
 * * * *

That God is not obtained by hypocrisy
 * * * *

God is not found by mummary,
 Yet every one wandereth about thus searching
 for Him

He who keepeth his heart in subjection,
 Recogniseth the Supreme Being
 * * * *

God and God's servant are both one—deem not
 that there is any difference between them
 As waves produced from water are again
 blended with it
 God remaineth apart from those who indulge in
 wrangling and pride "
 * * * *

Then follows a description of Govind Singh's
 birth and doings, his battles and victories The
 poem thus concludes —

"What can a miserable enemy do to him whom
 the Friend preserveth?
 He cannot even touch his shadow, the fool shall
 pass away

All—death saveth all His saints
 He hath tortured and destroyed all sinners ,
 He hath shown wonderful things to His saints,
 And saved them from all misery

Knowing me to be His slave, He hath aided me ,
He hath given me His hand and saved me "

In the *Chaurpai* and the introductory verses to the *Puranas*, we have Govind Singh's conception of the Divinity As far as we can see, they alone, among all his poems, contain the nearest approach to any religious or philosophic theory of Godhead and soul The theory is clearly theistic God is immanent in all creatures "The Primal Light which is called the One God, He at last infused into all His creatures " Though immanent in all, He yet transcends all and thus becomes an object of adoration and love

" The one God is contained in all things
But He established them all separately
And He pervadeth them all unseen
He hath given to all men their several entangle-
ments

He is separate from them and none of them hath
* * * found him "

" O God, thou dwellest apart from everything "

This was the theism that was current throughout North India in various forms, Vaishnavite and protestant, and, in spite of apparent differences of worship and mythology, was as much the religion of Vallabha as of Chaitanya, of the Maratha poets as of the Sikh Gurus

" O God, give me Thy hand and protect me, ✓
And all my desires shall be fulfilled .

May my heart be ever attached to thy feet !

Deem me Thine own and cherish me ,

Destroy all mine enemies ,

O Creator, may my family and all my servants and
disciples live in peace !

*

*

*

May the thirst for repeating Thy
name abide with me !

And may I not, forsaking Thee,
meditate on any one besides !

*

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*

Be Thou always on my side ,
O Thou with the sword on Thy
banner, protect me ,
Preserve me, O Thou Preserver,
Beloved Lord, Protector of the saints,
Friend of the poor, Destroyer of the tyrants

*

*

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*

My obeisance to Him alone
Who Himself adorneth all His subjects,
Who bestoweth divine attributes and happiness
on His servants,

Who destroyeth their enemies in a moment,
Who knoweth what is within every heart
And the sufferings of the good and the bad.

*

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*

He knoweth every one's sufferings,
And every secret of man's heart
When the Creator projected Himself,
His creatures assumed endless shapes ,
Whenever thou drawest creation within Thyself,
O Lord,

All embodied beings are absorbed in Thee ,
All creatures endowed with speech
Speak of Thee according to their understanding—
Thou dwellest apart from everything ,

*

*

*

*

Men according to their different understandings
Give different descriptions of Thee, O God

Thine extension cannot be conceived,
 Nor how thou didst first fashion creation
*Thou hast but one form and that form is incompar-
 able.*

* * * *

O God, protect me now,
 Save those who are my disciples,
 And destroy those who are not

(From the Chaupai)

O God, Thou art the Creator and the Destroyer—

* * * *

Thou dwellest apart and none can find Thee
 Wherefore thou art called the Endless One

* * * *

On seeing Thy saints distressed, Thou becomest
 uneasy;
 Wherefore thou art styled the Kinsman of the
 poor.

At last Thou shalt destroy the whole world,
 Wherefore the world calleth Thee Death

* * * *

On beholding the poor, Thou art compassionate to
 them,

So we deem Thee the Friend of the poor

* * * *

Thou didst appoint the forms of all things in the
 world,

Wherefore thou art called the Creator
 No one hath ever seen Thee anywhere,
 Wherefore thou art called the Unseen

Thou wert never born in the world,

Wherefore every one describeth Thee as Unborn.

* * * *

His form is incomparable and unequalled,

He hath no concern with garb or no garbs
 He bestoweth on all but beggeth from none,
 Wherefore He is recognised as the Provider

* * * *

He is not appeased by incantations, written or
 spoken, or by charms

* * * *

Some go to places of cremation, others to
 cemeteries ,

But God is at neither ,
 They who visit either are ruined by worldly love
 and contention

And the Lord remaineth separate from them
 What is a Hindu or Mussulman to him
 From whose heart doubt departeth ?

* * * *

They who are imbued with love*for the one God
 Disregard human opinion and are happy
 They who recognise the Primal Being as the one
 God,

Allow no other belief to enter their hearts
 They who cherish any other belief
 Shall be debarred from meeting the Friend

* * * *

They who know not the virtue of the One Name
 Belong neither to the forest nor to the house-
 hold

In the beginning God was the father of the whole
 world ,

From Him light first proceeded ,
 I have not sufficient ability to tell the tale,
 Or to mention the names of the different
 creatures he created

Things strong and weak were produced ,

God is peerless, imperishable, His throne is immor-
able,

He is peerless, endless, His praise is unrivalled,

He is the Indestructible and Invisible Lord.

He is everywhere king; He blossometh in the
forests and the glades—

His splendour is like the spring everywhere
diffused

The Great One pervadeth the woods and glades,
birds and quadrupeds

He every where blossometh, He is beautiful and
wise,

He blossometh like flowers, and glittereth like the
peacock.

His Power is perfect, He is the Bestower of food.
the Merciful,

The Treasury of Favour, the Perfect, the Bount-
eous

Wherever we look, there appeareth His splendour.

He is free from anger and a treasury of grace

He everywhere blossometh, He is beautiful and
wise

He is the great King of the woods and glades, of
sea and land

His splendour appeareth everywhere;

He is the Treasury of favour

His light dazzleth, His glory is perfect

The sky and the earth repeat His name

Over the seven heavens and the seven hills,

His net of *karm* is spread unseen

God ever cherisheth the poor, saveth saints and
destroyeth enemies

Of those who through greed of wealth continued
to loudly sing and recite God's praises,
And who danced but gave not their hearts thereto,
Hath any one found the way to God's wonder-
ful world ?

They excited laughter in the world and knew not
the essence of wisdom even in their
dreams

The poet Siam asketh, if God hath been obtained
by any one without love ?

Several meditated in the forest, and returned
home weary

Sidhs in meditation and Munis in deep research
have sought for God but found Him not
Siam sayeth, all the Veds and the Mahomedan
books, and the wisdom of the saints have
thus decided —

Hearken, O saints, the poet speaketh, they who
search with love obtain God.

I am the son of a brave man, not of a Brahman
how can I perform austerities ?

How can I turn my attention to Thee, O Lord, and
forsake domestic affairs ?

Now be pleased to grant me the boon I crave with
clasped hands ?

*That when the end of my life cometh, I may die
fighting in a mighty battle—*

What availeth it that men perform prostrations of
different kinds to God ? They are like wrest-
lers practising the exercise of *dand*.

What availeth it that men lie with their faces
 turned up? If they do not heartily bow to
 the supreme God, they are only as sick men
 If for ages thou do penance to a stone, it will
 never rejoice thee
 O fool, it will never generously lift its arm to
 requite thee
 Say what confidence can be placed in it? When
 trouble riseth it will not come to save thee.
 O man, practise *yog* in this way—

Make truth thy horn, sincerity thy necklace,
 and apply meditation as ashes to thy body,
 Make restraint of thy heart thy lyre, and the
 support of the Name thine alms,
 Play the Primal essence as thy strings, and
 thou shalt hear God's sweet song
 By the practice of the songs of divine knowledge,
 waves of melody and exquisite pleasure shall
 be produced
 Admonish thy heart, don the garb of self-
 restraint and utter God's name inaudibly
 So shall thy body ever remain like gold and
 death never approach thee "

The following poems deal with the cardinal doctrine of equality of men, to which Govind Singh's achievements gave a wide national scope and meaning —

"The temple and the Mosque are the same, the Hindu worship and the Mussalman prayer are the same, all men are the same, it is through error they appear different

All men have the same eyes, the same ears, the same body, the same habits, —a compound of earth, air, fire and water

Allah and Abhekh are the same, the Purans and the Koran are the same, they are all alike, it is the One God who created all

As from one fire, millions of sparks arise, though rising separately, they unite again in the fire,

As in one stream millions of waves are produced, the waves being made of water, all become water,

So from God's form, non-sentient and sentient things are manifested, and, springing from Him, shall all be united in Him again "

In perfect unison with the new addition he had made to the old Sikh teaching and faith the linking of bravery and patriotism with purity of life and devotion to God—the linking of the devotion to God with devotion to the sword—he composed a new Jap or national prayer, which is still sung along with Nanak's and is held in equal veneration. New names are herein given to the Supreme Being who is figured as the Lord of the sword and the Lord of death.

"The tenth Guru spoke with his holy mouth—
God hath no chaki or marks, no colour, no
caste, no lineage, .

No form, no complexion, no outline, no costume,
none can in any way describe him

He is immovable, fearless, luminous, and measure-
less in might,

He is accounted King of Kings, Lord of millions
of Indras,

He is Sovereign of the three worlds, demi-gods, men
and demons, the woods and dales declare Him
indescribable

O Lord, who can tell thy Names?

The wise call Thee special names according to Thy
deeds

(AKAL USTAT)

May we have the protection of the Immortal
Being !

May we have the protection of All-Steel !

May we have the protection of All-Death !

May we have the protection of All-Steel !"

We may quote at the end the sawaiyas said to
have been composed by Govind Singh himself and
usually sung when the pihul is administered
The poems are characteristic —

God is true, eternal, true to his promise, He is
from the beginning without beginning, un-
fathomable and invincible

Bounty, mercy, self-control, austerities, daily
ceremonies, continence, fasting, clemency, re-
ligious observances—all are contained in the
name of the Immutable One

He is, from the beginning, pure, without a
beginning, infinite, endless, without enmity,
without fear.

*He hath form and is without form or outline, He
groweth not old, He is compassionate and
merciful to his poor*

*

*

*

*

O True and Eternal One, perpetual is Thy domi-
nion, it is Thou who madest the *Vedas* and
the *Quran*

Thou didst appoint demi-gods, demons, the Sesa
serpent, the past and the present

From the beginning, before the ages, the stainless,
the Indestructible, *Thy Light is seen, though
Thou art unseen.*

O foolish man, Who hath come to tell thee of the
Invisible God ?

The *Vedas*, the *Puranas*, the *Quran*, all have
grown weary singing Thy praises, O God, but
Thou art not known unto them

Thou knowest all hearts on earth, in heaven, in
the nether regions and in every direction

*Thy praises fill the earth, they entering my heart
told me this—*

Some worship Brahma as God, others point to
Shiv as God ,

Some say that Vishnu is the Lord of the world,
and that by worshipping him all sins are erased

Think on this a thousand times, O fool, at the
last hour, all thy gods will forsake thee

Meditate on *Him in thy heart who was, is and ever
shall be*

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